



After Agnes

A Report on Flood Recovery Assistance



By the Pennsylvania Historical
and Museum Commission

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Waterlogged records were removed from the basement of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, Wilkes-Borre, by volunteers from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Shown in top photo are Henry Bown, associate archivist, and Leo Peoce, State Records Center clerk. The bottom photo shows the condition of records and books in the basement of the society as the volunteers began their work.

After Agnes

A Report on Flood Recovery Assistance By the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

By Harry E. Whipkey
State Archivist

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL
AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

Harrisburg, 1973

THE PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

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After Agnes: A Report

ALTHOUGH many of the scars will long be in evidence, the havoc created by Hurricane Agnes, and especially by her offspring, the disastrous flood of June 21 to 25, 1972, is now history. Well-documented reports have been published which explain, to some degree at least, the efforts of federal, State, and local officials, of private, fraternal, and religious organizations, of the business and health-care communities, and of concerned and heroic individuals to save lives, to look after the basic wants of victims, to protect property, and to keep the economies of hard-hit communities from collapsing.

In the wake of Agnes' fury, human needs obviously had first priority. But one could argue that the hurricane was almost as cruel to museums, historical societies, and libraries as it was to lives, homes, and businesses. The collections of cultural institutions in Pennsylvania were threatened by permanent damage, just as were the art treasures of Florence, Italy, as a consequence of the 1966 flood of the river Arno. This threat did not go unnoticed. Governor Milton J. Shapp, while faced first with the responsibility of meeting the human needs, was fully aware of the cultural needs. He immediately directed the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to move swiftly into the little "Florences" of the State. If necessary, it was to call upon the National Guard to work with it in saving valuable books, archives, manuscripts, and museum items.

The Commission was prompt in taking steps to survey the damage to historical societies and to historic sites and properties and in giving major attention to the salvage and rehabilitation of important historical and museum collections which might be threatened with destruction. Before the flood waters had subsided, Commissioner Maxwell White-man and Deputy Executive Director William J. Wewer* had moved to formulate correct strategy. In telephone conversations with Dr. William T. Alderson of the American Association for State and Local History, Dr. Richmond D. Williams of the Eleutherian Mills Historical Library,

* William J. Wewer was named executive director of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in December, 1972.

and Dr. Whitfield Bell of the American Philosophical Society, they developed plans for action. These were discussed with Mrs. Ferne Smith Hetrick, chairman of the Commission; and the backing of the Governor was secured for this special and unprecedented Commission operation. Four main steps were involved:

1. Providing information on the salvage and rehabilitation of manuscripts, books, and museum pieces.
2. Finding out which historical societies and which historic sites and properties had suffered damage and how extensive it was.
3. Assisting as much as possible in salvage and rehabilitation of historical collections, with emphasis on the collections of major importance.
4. Seeking federal or other aid to enable the flood-stricken historical societies to repair or replace damaged buildings, to rehabilitate collections, and to resume their services.

INFORMATION ON SALVAGE AND REHABILITATION

To meet the need for information, Commissioner Whiteman enlisted the aid of Dr. Whitfield Bell and Howard Diehl of the American Philosophical Society. They located detailed information on the salvage and restoration of manuscripts, books, and microfilms—partly from a report of a 1971 Seminar at the Boston Athenaeum, "When Disaster Strikes," which had been suggested by the American Association for State and Local History. When this material reached Harrisburg, Dr. Donald H. Kent, director of the Commission's Bureau of Archives and History, condensed and reduced it to the essentials relating to flood and water damage. It was then mimeographed in quantity. Similarly, J. Duncan Campbell, director of the Commission's William Penn Memorial Museum, Harrisburg, prepared condensed information on the "Salvage of Historical Objects," which was also mimeographed. So great was the immediate demand for both brochures that it was necessary to increase the mimeograph run several times. Although the first brochure, "Suggestions for Salvage of Manuscripts, Books, and Microfilms," was intended primarily for historical societies and museums, the State Library asked for 650 copies to send to libraries, the Greater Harrisburg Chamber of Commerce asked for twelve copies, and more than a hundred requests came from individuals.

Later, similar material—some of it more specialized—came from the group concerned with the conservation of historic and artistic works in the Cooperstown graduate programs, Cooperstown, New York, which was working in cooperation with the New York State Historical Association, the American Association for State and Local History, and the



The Heisey House, Lock Haven, headquarters and museum of the Clinton County Historical Society, was badly damaged by flood waters.

Emergency Clearing Center at the New York State Museum, Albany. The National Archives and the Smithsonian Institution also provided specialized information on restoration problems.

SURVEY OF DAMAGE

As a result of a June 26 call from Whiteman to Wewer, a telephone survey of historical societies was begun on Tuesday, June 27, to learn what damage they had suffered. Charged with this survey was the State Archives, which is specifically the Division of Archives and Manuscripts of the Bureau of Archives and History. By June 28, the State Archivist could report that more than half of the active historical societies in the Commonwealth had been contacted; and by the end of the week nearly all of the remaining societies were contacted. Fortunately, the reports from most of the societies were good, and at first it was learned that only two had sustained damage. At Lock Haven, the building and certain museum exhibits of the Clinton County Historical Society were ravaged by the flooding West Branch of the Susquehanna

River. Structural damage and damage to exhibit cases, furnishings, and grounds and shrubbery were placed at about \$21,000. In addition, it was estimated that the cost of restoring artifacts would be \$5,000. The society's manuscript collections had been taken to safety at Lock Haven State College.

At Muncy, Lycoming County, several museum exhibits and some fifty books in the Muncy Historical Society were damaged by flood waters from Muncy Creek. The cost of replacement and repair was set at \$9,000. The figure would have been much higher had it not been for the vigorous action of the society's members, who managed to save nearly all of the organization's important collections. The officers of the Clinton and Muncy societies promised to send detailed damage reports and photographs, and were advised as to immediate temporary measures for preservation.

There remained one important society, the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, Wilkes-Barre, which staff members of the Archives were unable to reach by telephone either at the society or at the home of its director, Ralph Hazeltine, a former member of the Historical and Museum Commission. There was considerable fear that the society's headquarters, 69 South Franklin Street, would be badly damaged. The building, which had suffered a great deal from the less severe flood of 1936, was certainly in a vulnerable position, located just a few blocks from the Susquehanna River. The society's holdings included some 20,000 books and manuscript collections of great significance for the history of northeastern Pennsylvania; their loss would be a major blow to Pennsylvania history.

In an attempt to get Hazeltine or some other officer to contact the Commission, various members of the society living some distance from Wilkes-Barre were telephoned. Having no success in this, on June 29, Dr. Kent sent John Bodnar, the Commission's associate historian for ethnic studies, to the Wilkes-Barre area to try to get word through, and also to look into the situation at King's College, Wilkes College, and the Wyoming Seminary. Commissioner Whiteman also arranged to have a notice broadcast by radio asking Hazeltine to telephone the Commission. Then, on the afternoon of June 30, word came from Bodnar that officials feared the possibility of a gas explosion in the vicinity of the society's headquarters. This news caused Mrs. Hetrick to begin making arrangements to have a National Guard unit sent in to remove endangered historical material. At this point, however, at 3:45 P.M., Friday, June 30, the call came from Hazeltine. This call gave justification to previous fears.

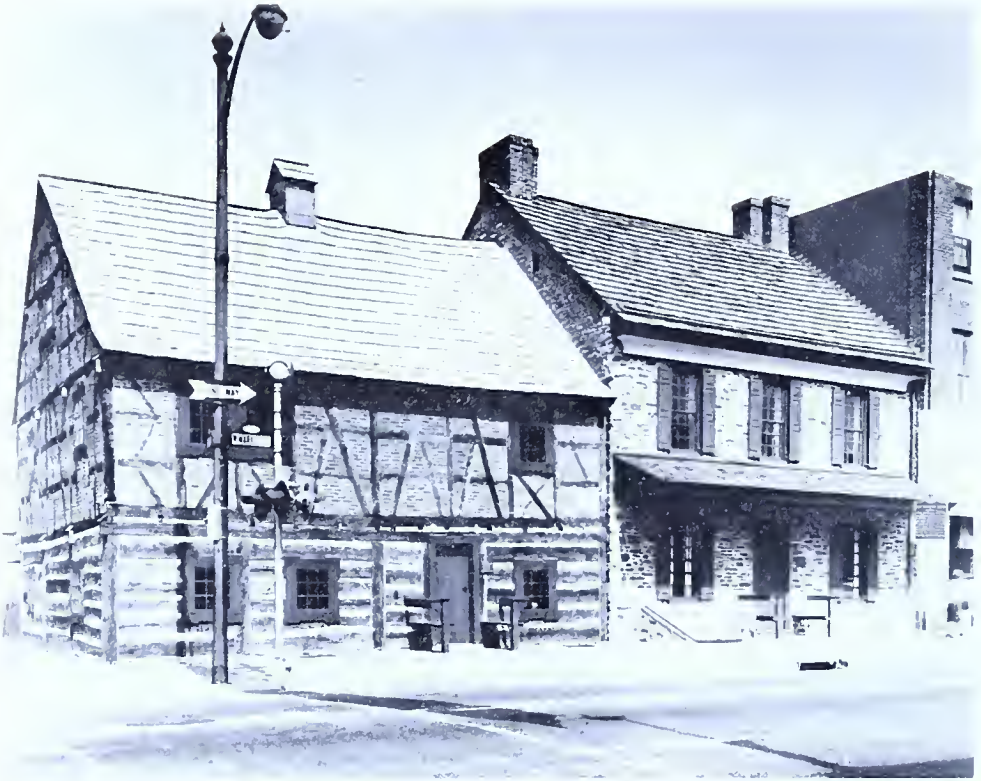
Hazeltine explained that the Wyoming society had been inundated,

as had most of Wilkes-Barre, when the Susquehanna breached sandbag barricades and poured flood waters into the city. Muddy water had completely filled the basement of the headquarters building and had risen to a height of approximately one inch above the flooring of the first floor. The problem was that the basement housed a sizable portion of the organization's valuable library and archival holdings.

Fortunately, thinking back to the experiences of 1936, the society's officers, especially Hazeltine and Harrison Smith, its president, had acted quickly, once the emergency became clear, to move a considerable number of manuscripts and published works to safety. Most were taken to the upper floors of the headquarters building. Before every-



Ralph Hazeltine, director of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, Wilkes-Barre, points to the high-water line at the main entrance of the society's headquarters.



The Golden Plough Tavern, left, and the General Gates House, both maintained in York by the Historical Society of York County, received considerable flood damage in basement areas.

thing could be moved, however, more than 300 cubic feet of papers and books were engulfed in the basement of the society's headquarters.

Hazeltine, explaining further that the danger of a gas explosion had passed, did not think it necessary to detail National Guardsmen to salvage the collections. He requested instead that trained and knowledgeable men be sent in to deal with the situation. And he stated that he would need help in rehabilitating and preserving the papers and books once they were rescued. Damage to the society's building, furnishings, and collections was placed at more than \$90,000. The role played by the Commission in salvaging and restoring the materials of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society will be described later.

In early August, word was received that Hurricane Agnes had caused an estimated \$2,750 in damage to the museum-library of the Greene County Historical Society near Waynesburg. Damage done to downspouts, the brick exterior, plaster, wallpaper, and carpeting had not been observed when the society was initially contacted in late June. Museum and library collections were not damaged. It was also later

determined that York's General Gates House, Golden Plough Tavern, and Bonham House, all maintained by the Historical Society of York County, had suffered about \$3,000 in damage.

Simultaneously with the post-flood survey conducted by the archivists, Deputy Executive Director Wewer was contacting the many museums, historic sites, and properties administered by the Commission. Staff members at Bushy Run Battlefield, Conrad Weiser Park, Daniel Boone Homestead, Drake Well, Ephrata Cloister, Pennsbury Manor, the Pennsylvania Farm Museum, Pottsgrove Mansion, and the Robert Fulton Birthplace reported inconveniences and minor problems, e.g., piles of debris, fallen trees, damaged roads, wrecked picnic tables, and flooded basements.

Damage totaling more than \$6,000 was reported at the Priestley House. Prompt attention had been given, however, to the need of moving museum exhibits to safety. At the Pennsylvania Military Museum, there was considerable damage to several small bridges, and many tons of gravel from a local highway repair job were washed onto the grounds. The cost of making necessary repairs and of conducting a general clean-up was placed at \$5,000. The Old Mill Village property, in addition to the loss of three small bridges, suffered damage to the foundations of several structures, including the large arts and crafts building. The estimate for repairs was placed at \$2,700.

Superintendent Horace Willcox of Valley Forge State Park reported that an employee's State-owned residence at Perkiomen Junction would require contracted services totaling at least \$15,000. Other problems, including ruined plaster and wallpaper in a number of buildings, brought the estimated amount needed for rehabilitation at Valley Forge to \$21,000.

By far the hardest hit of the properties was the Fort Pitt Museum, Pittsburgh. Water reached a level of nearly four feet throughout the building and there was considerable damage to dioramas, flooring, walls, doors, and electrical and air-conditioning units. Major repairs would be necessary. The cost was estimated at \$240,000.

Fortunately, the museum's precious artifacts and documents had been moved out of harm's way. At approximately 10 A.M., Friday, June 23, Rex Lohmann, curator, learned that the "no danger" information earlier received from the National Weather Service was totally incorrect and that the museum would definitely be flooded. Having little time to spare, he immediately rented a twenty-foot van to remove museum pieces and as much moveable material as possible. Welcomed and indefatigable assistance came from Pittsburgh-area members of the Historical and Museum Commission, Mrs. Nathan Schwartz and Stan-

ley Brosky; from Dr. Russell Parkinson, history professor at Point Park College, and a number of his students; and from Warren B. Dana, vice-president of the Fort Pitt Museum Associates, and other members of that organization.

By 5 P.M., "when the water through which we had to drive the truck was a foot and a half deep," the removal of items was halted and the van, holding "just about everything valuable and moveable," was taken to a secure location in the Carnegie Museum compound. Those museum objects remaining in the building were placed in safe locations.

As soon as reports were received from museums and historic sites and properties, the Commission's Bureau of Museums, directed by William N. Richards, and Bureau of Historic Sites and Properties, directed by Frank J. Schmidt, began to determine the exact character of losses and damages and to develop plans for correct repair and restoration. Cleanup crews were soon active. And ways of meeting the cost of repair and rehabilitation were quickly investigated. By early 1973, funds to satisfy most expenses had been received from State and federal sources, most coming from the federal Office of Emergency Preparedness.

At the direction of the Deputy Executive Director, a third post-flood canvass for information was conducted by the staff of the Commission's



The Fort Pitt Museum.

Historic Sites Survey. It was learned that six historic covered bridges in Lancaster County had been totally destroyed as had been the Port Royal covered bridge in Juniata County. The Hillsgrove covered bridge in Sullivan County and the Walnut Street bridge in Harrisburg had suffered considerable structural damage. Historic Mouns Jones House in Berks County had been inundated and was stained with oil. In addition, water damage was reported at seven historic sites in Luzerne County, one in Clinton County, one in Northumberland County, two in Lancaster County, three in Lebanon County, and two in York County.

ASSISTANCE IN SALVAGE AND REHABILITATION OF COLLECTIONS

The needs of the Clinton County Historical Society, the Muncy Historical Society, and other historical organizations regarding the rescue and restoration of archival, library, and museum collections were not extensive and could be dealt with by adherence to suggestions found in the brochures prepared by the Commission or by information provided by competent members of the Commission's staff. More direct action was called for at the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society.

As soon as communications were re-established with the society, Dr. Kent, as directed by Deputy Executive Director Wewer, moved to prepare the Bureau of Archives and History to meet the emergency. On Saturday, July 1, a four-man team, led by the State Archivist, was dispatched to Wilkes-Barre with a small truck and a station wagon. Already in the area, as mentioned above, was Associate Historian John Bodnar. Aware of the many problems facing officials in the Wyoming Valley and aware that the National Guard was on duty to keep all unnecessary traffic out of Wilkes-Barre, the group traveled with this authorization:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Mr. Harry E. Whipkey, State Archivist, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, is being sent with a team of Archives and History staff members to assist and advise in the salvage of important historical collections in the Wilkes-Barre area, especially at the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society. Those with him include Mr. Frank Suran, Associate Archivist; Mr. Henry Bown, Associate Archivist; Mr. John Bodnar, Associate Historian for Ethnic Studies; and Mr. Leo Peace, Records Center Clerk. This operation has been authorized by Mrs. Ferne S. Hetrick, Commission Chairman,



The Wyoming society's library and archives after the flood.

and by Mr. William J. Wewer, Deputy Executive Director. This work to save important resources for the history of Pennsylvania is backed by the Governor, by the National Archives, and by the American Association for State and Local History.

Co-operation and assistance in this operation will be much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,
DONALD H. KENT, *Director*
Bureau of Archives and History

Arriving at the society's headquarters in mid-morning, the task force was faced with anything but pleasant conditions. To enter the basement library area, it was necessary to push through piles of debris, right toppled map racks, and contend with several inches of foul-

smelling mud and water. In the library itself, work had to be conducted with the aid of flashlights. Portions of the ceiling had collapsed or were threatening to fall. Manuscript boxes, original business records, and library volumes had either swelled into tight masses on the shelves or had ended up in wet and muddy heaps in the aisles.

Making judgments on the materials so that the most valuable pieces would be salvaged first, the men—with a great deal of difficulty—hailed out fifty cubic feet of business journals and of document boxes filled with important manuscripts. The manuscripts included part of the famous Hendrick B. Wright Collection, segments of the Hollenback Collection, a portion of the Charles Miner Papers, records of Sharpe & Weiss Coal Company, records of Leisenring & Company, and Dorrance family papers.



Water-soaked genealogical records in the library of the Wyoming society.

At this point, at about 2:30 P.M., it was necessary to find a cold-storage plant where the records could be frozen. Since no such facility was available in Wilkes-Barre, the materials were trucked some twenty-five miles to Hazleton, where—after considerable frustration in attempting to locate a cold-storage depository on a Saturday afternoon—arrangements were finally made for their temporary storage in deep freeze at the S. & R. Provision Company, 105-115 West Chestnut Street, Hazleton, by courtesy of its owner, Sam Farnell. Freezing, it may be noted, is recommended in order to stabilize water-soaked papers and books and to prevent mold or mildew until they can be properly dried and preserved. This was one of the lessons learned during the 1966 Florence disaster.

Additional historical materials were removed from the society on July 5 (twenty cubic feet), July 6 (fifty cubic feet), July 10 (sixty cubic feet), July 14 (sixty cubic feet), and July 18 (forty-five cubic feet). The final total from the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society was 285 cubic feet. Only about twenty cubic feet had to be



The Wyoming society's flood-damaged map collection.



Sam Farnell, owner of the S. & R. Provision Company, Hazleton.

given up as lost, and most of this was of a character that could be replaced without too much difficulty. Assisting the archivists in the later salvage operations were James Arnold, Archives clerk, and Thomas Arnold and Thomas Graziani, Records Center clerks. The archivists also had the help of two very knowledgeable volunteers, Dr. H. Benjamin Powell of the history department of Bloomsburg State College and Stewart Campbell, graduate student from the University of Delaware. The expert advice of Ralph Hazeltine was, of course, always available, and Dr. Kent remained in daily telephone communication with him throughout the period to co-ordinate the operations in Harrisburg and Wilkes-Barre.

Those records rescued on July 5, i.e., during the second of the six rescue operations, were placed in the Hazleton Ice Plant, 190 South Pine Street, Hazleton. Space was provided free of charge by Nicholas Caputo, owner. On this same day it became apparent that it would be necessary to move all of the material from the two Hazleton facilities as soon as possible because of the risk, however slight, of contaminating meat and other foods in such small plants. For this reason, on July 6 the Commission reserved space, an entire vault, at the Reading Cold Storage Company, Read and Elm streets, Reading, at a cost of

\$150 a month. Materials earlier stored in Hazleton were transferred to Reading by July 10. Records salvaged from Wilkes-Barre on July 10, 14, and 18 were taken directly to the Reading Cold Storage Company.

By July 18 the Commission's archivists had gathered up manuscripts and books from other area institutions, swelling the volume of materials removed from Wilkes-Barre to more than 300 cubic feet. The additional materials included records of the Forty Fort Cemetery, the badly battered cemetery located across the Susquehanna from Wilkes-Barre (one cubic foot); valuable historical works from the Osterhout Free Library, the public library located next door to the society's headquarters (twenty cubic feet); records of the Wyoming Conference of the Methodist church (five cubic feet); valuable theses from Wilkes College (three cubic feet); and Payne family papers, rescued from the historic Payne home on Wilkes-Barre's flood-damaged River Street (eight cubic feet). The Payne papers had been scheduled to go to the society.

Once the manuscripts, books, and other historical materials were



The hay drier. The center projection houses an oil heater from which warm air is fanned into tunnel.



The warm-air tunnel of the hay drier showing the trap-door system at the right through which air is channeled into drying section.

safely stabilized in cold storage, plans for drying and rehabilitating them rapidly took shape. Early in July the records management staff of the Commonwealth's Office of Administration successfully employed a mammoth hay drier belonging to Hershey Estates, in Hershey, to dry a large volume of records of the Bureau of Management Information Systems. The method used, involving the regulated circulation of warm air for a period of days, was similar to one adopted in Florence

after the 1966 disaster, when facilities for drying tobacco, bricks, straw, ceramics, and rice were pressed into service with favorable results. Through the generosity of officials of Hershey Estates and working with the Office of Administration, and especially with Mrs. Frances Swank, chief, Data and Information Coordination Section, the Commission arranged to make use of this technique.

On July 19 all of the historical material was removed from the vault at the Reading Cold Storage Company, transported to Hershey, allowed to thaw, and packed for proper arrangement in the huge hay drier. The items were packed in apple crates and potato boxes, well-ventilated containers which would allow the warm air to move freely over the records. In placing the papers and books in the cartons, care was taken to insure that they were loosely arranged, e.g., books on their edges with the pages fanned out.

The type of hay drier used had two sizable drying sections, separated by a warm-air tunnel running across the belly of the structure. As designed, warm air is fanned into the tunnel from a large oil heater, stationed under a projection at the side of the building. The air is then forced into the drying areas in a regulated way by opening small trap doors located at the base of the tunnel. Both drying sections may be used at the same time, or, as in the case of the Commission's project, all of the heat may be funneled into one section. The materials to be dried are placed on slatted platforms, the warm air is forced under the platforms, and over a period of days the drying process is completed.

The items in the Commission's care, in their crates and boxes, were placed in the drier with bales of hay. This had the unexpected result of temporarily covering over the odors created by the flood, i.e., when the water-damaged materials were removed, they smelled like hay. Unfortunately, this did not last for long; the unwanted odors soon returned. But regarding the intended use of the drier, the results were better than expected. When the Office of Administration had used the facility in early July, only loose papers had been dried. It was feared that what had worked well with papers might not work at all with bound volumes. However, in the massive operation, begun on July 21 and completed on July 27, the warm air circulated by the large machine effectively dried approximately eighty per cent of the more than 300 cubic feet of papers and books. The remaining items, while not completely dry, were certainly in much better condition than they had been previously.

With this process completed, the materials were repacked and imme-



Courtesy Mrs. Frances Swank

Manuscripts and books being correctly packed to be placed in hay drier.



Courtesy Mrs. Frances Swank

Papers and books in place in the hay drier.

diately moved to the State Archives Building, Harrisburg, where they were fumigated and prepared for restoration.

Those items—mostly books—which were still somewhat wet were carefully arranged with the pages fanned out in the work area of the Archives, where they benefited from correct temperature and humidity control. Electric fans were used as additional drying aids. In treating some volumes, it was considered best to interleave the pages with blotters, changing the interleaving as often as necessary. Without exception, all the material removed from Wilkes-Barre was dried.

The most tedious job remained. Papers and volumes had to be cleaned, flattened, and sorted. In most instances, because they had received the greatest damage, covers were removed from books. A noteworthy innovation was the use of electric sandpaper machines to clean the dried mud from the edges of volumes. But in nearly all cases, each volume and each manuscript had to be cleaned page by page. This was a time-consuming operation. During August, September, October, November, and December, much of the time of the Commission's archival staff was spent in rehabilitating the records and books and making them ready for shipment back to Wilkes-Barre. The results were gratifying. By early 1973 all the restored materials had been returned. They were in clean and usable condition. The volumes



Members of the Division of Archives and Manuscripts clean flood-damaged books.



Members of the staff of the Division of Archives and Manuscripts of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission restoring books and papers.



Newly cleaned books, ready for new covers, are inspected by Harry E. Whipkey, State archivist; Dr. Donald H. Kent, director of the Bureau of Archives and History; and Steven Suknaic, archives clerk.



Among members of the Archives staff who worked on restoration are Henry Bown, Mrs. Judie Piccolo, Steven Suknaic, Mrs. Dana Beyer, Deborah Knoll, and James Arnold. Note the restored poster with an appropriate motto.

were being rebound and the more valuable papers laminated. Approximately ninety-five per cent of the materials had been satisfactorily rehabilitated.

FINANCIAL AID FOR SOCIETIES

At the height of the crisis, before the flood waters had subsided, attention was already being given to the need of having funds on hand to help historical societies meet the cost of repairing battered buildings and restoring damaged collections. Efforts to determine the availability of federal aid were quickly made by Commissioner Whiteman, Deputy Executive Director Wewer, and Bureau Director Kent, with the result that the National Endowment for the Humanities soon announced that a total of \$10,000 in emergency funds would be used to help historical organizations defray portions of their expense in restoring collections. The Endowment, restricting itself in this instance to historical societies in New York and Pennsylvania, subsequently presented a \$4,000 grant to the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society.

The bulk of the money needed, however, was provided by the Com-

monwealth. Moving with dispatch, the State legislature on July 6 passed House Bill No. 1754. Signed by Governor Shapp on July 7, this measure became Act No. 18-A, "an act making appropriations for emergency and disaster relief in connection with flooding and tropical storm disaster in the Commonwealth." Section 1 stated:

The sum of one hundred thirteen million dollars (\$113,000,000), or as much thereof as is necessary is hereby appro-



James Arnold, clerk, Harry E. Whipkey, State archivist, and Frank Suran, associate archivist, inspect rehabilitated material ready to be returned to the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society.

priated to the Governor for emergency and disaster relief especially in connection with the tropical storm and flood damage of June, 1972; for emergency use in the alleviation of human hardship and suffering and for the protection of property; for the reimbursement to various departments and agencies of the commonwealth for their participation in disaster relief activities, including, but not limited to, materials, supplies, services, food, clothing, equipment, chemicals, drugs and medicines, channel enlargement, rectification, realignment and side slope protection; and transportation, and for the payment of bills incurred in connection with the above purposes in the fiscal year ended June 30, 1972.

Following the passage of Act No. 18-A and in response to a request by Governor Shapp for suggested flood-relief recovery programs, dated July 17 and directed to the heads of all administrative departments, independent administrative boards, and commissions, William J. Wewer prepared a proposal for providing financial assistance to those historical societies in need. In abbreviated form, the proposal was as follows:

FLOOD RELIEF RECOVERY PROGRAM
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

Title of program proposal

Flood Recovery—Historical Societies

Description:

Local historical societies throughout the Commonwealth were contacted to determine estimated damages to society buildings, furnishings, and archives. Our proposal is financial assistance to the societies to provide for their rapid recovery. A lump sum appropriation would be made to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to be distributed to the societies in accordance with their demonstrated needs.

Need to which program proposal is addressed:

The appropriation would be utilized for the repair of structures, display areas and archives, as well as the replacement and repair of furnishings and artifacts.

Cost by Year

A one-time, lump sum appropriation

General Fund

1972-73

\$100,000.

On the basis of this suggestion and under the authority of Section 1 of Act No. 18-A, the Governor on August 21 allocated \$100,000, or as much thereof as would be necessary, to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to be passed on to those societies making proper application and preparing complete documentation of damages. As of this writing, flood relief applications from the following societies have been approved by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission: Clinton County Historical Society, \$11,474; Muncy Historical Society, \$5,630; Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, \$61,964; Historical Society of York County, \$2,953. Applications are expected from the Greene County Historical Society and the Friends of the Caleb Pusey House, Inc. Although the latter organization was not victimized by Hurricane Agnes, it has been judged eligible for a share of the funds allocated to the Commission since its property, including the historic Caleb Pusey House and the Landingford Plantation in Upland, suffered damage estimated at \$17,000 from a flash flood in the fall of 1971.

It is interesting to note that the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, not forgetting what had happened in 1936, held a flood insurance policy which compensated it for losses or damages totaling \$26,924. This covered only about one-third of the society's expenses. But how many societies are protected to this extent, or to any realistic degree?

